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*The University of Montana*

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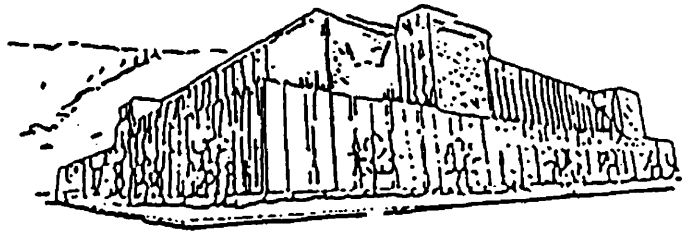
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CAUGHT BETWEEN THE TRICKSTER AND THE SAVIOR:  
A CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION'S EFFORTS TO RECONNECT THE  
TURKS WITH NATURE

by

Bridget Grosser

B.A. Beloit College, 1995

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

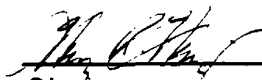
for the degree of

Master of Science

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1997

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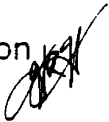
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Caught Between the Trickster and the Savior: A Conservation Organization's Efforts to Reconnect the Turks With Nature (73 pp.)

Chairperson: Hank Harrington 

ABSTRACT

Two powerful figures, Nasreddin Hoca and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, both legendary and adored throughout the Republic of Turkey, create an ideological tug-of-war among the loyal Turks. Nasreddin Hoca is a Trickster figure whose most predominant message is "Every man for himself." Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, promotes united nationalism and future-oriented thinking. The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD), in its attempts to save wildlife habitat from destruction, itself alternates its practices and political position between the Trickster and the Savior. Environmental issues in Turkey revolve around the struggle between the logic of Nasreddin Hoca and the fiery will of Ataturk. Turkey's Mediterranean Coast is used as an example of the logic behind environmental destruction nation-wide. In terms of public relations and education, DHKD's response to the environmental problems of the Mediterranean are sometimes as destructive as the problems themselves.

DHKD's attempts at environmental education reveal a struggle within the organization itself. Tactics range from random distribution of materials to formal environmental education in schools. DHKD staff members' comments and beliefs about their fellow citizens suggest that the Trickster/Savior struggle is occurring within each individual. In a country that is still struggling to fit into the model of Western democracy, these staff members have political and social beliefs that range from fascist to communist, pessimistic to optimistic.

In conclusion, I offer four suggestions for DHKD in regards to their involvement in and creation of a truly Turkish conservation movement. These suggestions offer tactics to find a balance between Nasreddin Hoca and Ataturk while educating about the environment.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank the following for their help and support in this project: The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD), especially Esin Uslu and Gul Sat; Prof. Hank Harrington, Prof. Mehrdad Kia, Prof. Ron Erickson and Nancy Erickson; Prof. Dr. Seyfi Karabas of Middle Eastern Technical University; Yasemin Biro; Jeff Edmonds; Will Harris; Kelly Keilman; Katy Seitz; my parents and God.

## Table of Contents

List of Figures	... v
<u>Chapter One</u>	... 1
<p>Two powerful figures, Nasreddin Hoca and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, both legendary and adored throughout the Republic of Turkey create an ideological tug-of-war among the loyal Turks. The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD), in its attempts to save wildlife habitat from destruction, itself alternates its practices and political position between the Trickster and the Savior.</p>	
<u>Chapter Two</u>	... 21
<p>Environmental issues in Turkey revolve around the struggle between the logic of Nasreddin Hoca and the fiery will of Ataturk. In this chapter, Turkey's Mediterranean Coast is used as an example of the logic behind environmental destruction nation-wide. In terms of public relations and education, DHKD's response to the environmental problems of the Mediterranean are sometimes as destructive as the problems themselves.</p>	
<u>Chapter Three</u>	... 32
<p>DHKD's attempts at education to resolve the struggle between the Hoca and Ataturk, reveal a struggle within the organization itself. Education tactics range from random distribution of posters and booklets to formal environmental education in grade schools.</p>	
<u>Chapter Four</u>	... 45
<p>DHKD staff members talk about their ideas of education for Turks. Their comments and beliefs about their fellow citizens suggest that the Trickster/Savior struggle is occurring within each individual. In a country that is still struggling to fit into the model of Western democracy, these staff members have political and social beliefs that range from fascist to communist, optimistic to pessimistic.</p>	
<u>Conclusion</u>	... 67
<p>Suggestions for DHKD to increase their involvement in and creation of a truly Turkish conservation movement.</p>	
Appendix	... 70
Bibliography	... 71

## List of Figures

1. Nasreddin Hoca	. . . . 5
2. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk	. . . . 11
3. The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD), Summer	. . . . 20
4. Goksu Delta, Protected Special Area Sign, July 1996	. . . . 26
5. Coffee house in Uzuncaburc with DHKD Jeep, July 1996	. . . . 44
6. DHKD staff handing out books in Uzuncaburc, July 1996	. . . . 44
7. Line at Kuyubasi <i>cesme</i> , Istanbul, July 1996	. . . . 47
8. Street cats eating outside a cafe, Kiziltoprak, Istanbul, June 1996	. . . . 52
9. Fruit and vegetable vendors, Kuyubasi, Istanbul, June 1996	. . . . 56
10. Village near Seyfe Golu in Central Anatolia, July 1996	. . . . 59
11. DHKD membership advertisement	. . . . 61

## Chapter One

Despite a long history of intense human use and recent uncontrolled development, Turkey still hosts a remarkable diversity of wildlife. This single country, roughly twice the size of Montana, contains more animal species than all of Europe and almost as many plant species. With the shift from pastoral agriculture to cash crops, marginally regulated industry, and heavy coastal tourism all of these species and their habitats are threatened.

The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD), a member of WWF International and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, was founded in 1975 as a loose organization of hunters and bird watchers concerned about the disappearance of the bald ibis in southeastern Turkey. Eventually the group's sphere of interest and influence expanded to include wetlands, coastal areas, and preservation of native plants. Today with the bald ibis as its flagship species, DHKD is the most powerful environmental NGO in Turkey.

In order to teach an environmental ethic in Turkey, DHKD struggles to overcome numerous political and psychological barriers. One of the largest barriers to formal environmental education is the national education system through which students learn by lecture and memorization rather than discussion and experimentation. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish nation, and himself a teacher to the Turkish people, encouraged development and Westernization in the industrial and political sectors. Today conservation is often seen as stifling that progress.

seen as stifling that progress.

Even more difficult to overcome is the ideological tug-of-war that occurs between the ethical ideals of two Turkish legendary heroes. Turkish nationalists have taken both sides throughout history. There are those who believe Turkey needs to reach back to its early Islamic past to find political and cultural identity. There are others who believe that Turkey should look within its pre-Islamic roots for culture and to the West for guidance in civilization. The struggle raises the question: Are Turks Turkish because of their religion or because of their blood? I have heard people disclaim their Turkish heritage because of the occurrence of unsavory political activities or the behavior of others. In these seemingly everyday situations the person bitterly states, "I'm not Turkish. I was just born here." Ziya Gokalp, a sociologist at the end of the Ottoman period, attempts to reconcile the identity crisis when he writes, "Tradition not only establishes continuity and harmony between the forms that an institution assumes at various times, but also shows how all of them are derived from the same origin, thus serving to cement them together" (Berkes, 1959: 95). It is this uniting tradition that DHKD strives to achieve, despite the almost life-like presence of two legendary heroes.

The first of these heroes, Nasreddin Hoca, the protagonist in a large and old tradition of humorous anecdotes, embodies the characteristics and values of a trickster. He is the Turkish folk philosopher and the source of many contemporary idioms. He is a wise old man, irreverent and clever, sometimes lazy, and always able to get the best of the situation.

The other hero is Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish republic. Atatürk is the soldier, the savior, and the sometimes vicious leader who gained much of his power through deceit and good fortune. Atatürk gave the Turkish people a new identity by embarking on a massive god-like creation process, reinventing the history and culture of the Turkish people as well as the written and spoken language.

Opposition between the two figures exists in the methods they use to create change, both consciously and unconsciously. They are two immortal figures, mysterious in origin, who appear and reappear in official and unofficial politics. One promotes ingenuity, the other intuition and personal responsibility. Nasreddin Hoca justifies his actions; Atatürk thought before he acted. Nasreddin Hoca teaches his followers to resign themselves to fate; Atatürk believed in the power of a unified community to make change. Despite this opposition between the conservative and the radical, both receive the devotion of the nation.

### NASREDDIN HOCA

Nasreddin Hoca was once traveling with a caravan. Early in the morning everyone began to get on their horses in a hurry.

The servants brought Hoca's animal to the horse-block. Hoca put his right foot into the stirrup and swung himself up, thus landing on the horse with his face to the tail.

"Oh, you clumsy man!" the servant cried. "You got up the wrong way!"

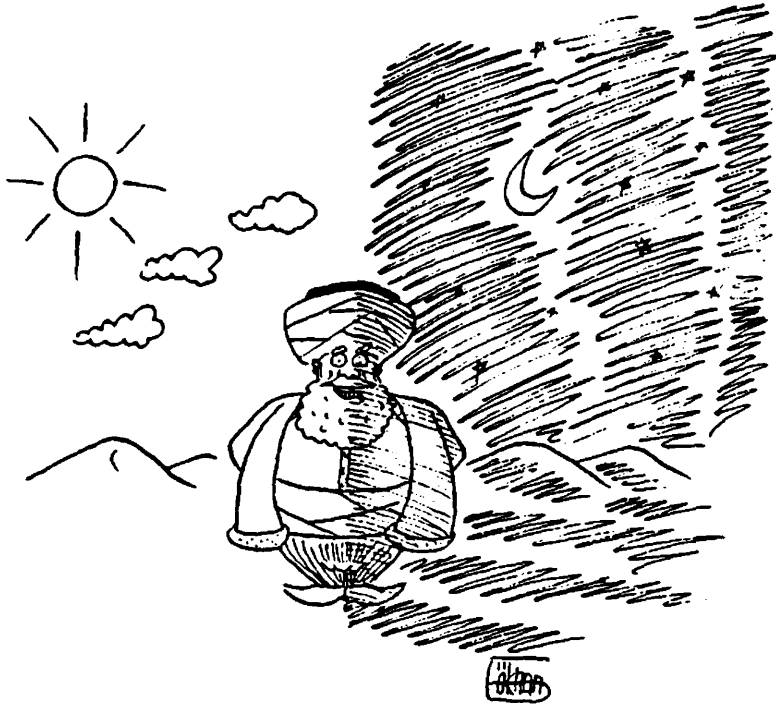
"Not at all! Nasreddin Hoca answered. "It was the horse. It is left-footed." (Muallimoglu, 1986: 69)



It is a mystery as to whether a man named Nasreddin Hoca ever lived (Fig. 1). If he did, the exact years he lived are even more uncertain. He is a figure associated with the town of Aksehir in the region of Konya, which is the former seat of the Selcuk Empire. The narratives set him historically sometime during the 13-15 century A.D.

Nasreddin Hoca stories are not only about an old man. Some of the stories are about Nasreddin, the young boy, showing his cleverness among the other boys of the village. In the majority of tales, Nasreddin Hoca is a religious teacher (hoca) and a judge and lives a very modest life.

Nasreddin Hoca is a folk philosopher of the Turkish people whose seeming naivete and foolishness reflect a deeper understanding of human nature and struggles. The Hoca also used humor to make fun of his own people and the corrupt government which led them. This criticism gives moral guidance during uncertain times and in the absence of effective leadership.



**Fig. 1. Nasreddin Hoca**

Source: Gokhan Ozgen, Illustrator *In* Karabas & Bear, 1996.  
*Nasreddin Hoca Folk Narratives from Turkey*.  
Middle East Technical University: Ankara, Turkey.

### *The Role of the Humorous Hoca*

They asked the Hoca where his nose was and he pointed to the back of his neck. They said: 'You showed the exact opposite.' 'It is impossible to know something,' he said, 'unless you know its opposite. (Karabas, 1996: 55)

Nasreddin Hoca stories are told from generation to generation. In a nation where oral tradition still holds much import in the culture, the Hoca's stories are particularly valuable as lessons in morality. All Turks know Nasreddin Hoca and claim him as one of their own. His jokes litter coffee houses and punctuate debates. E.E. Talu noted, "'Nasreddin Hoca is ours. He was born of us, he lived among us; with his fine anecdotes and with his witticisms he has oftentimes been the interpreter of our feelings; our sorrows, our merits and our shortcomings'" (Burrill, 1970: 8).

The Hoca's stories at first seem quite stupid, and he seems the impish fool. Behind this guise, the Hoca deftly plays the role of the Trickster. At the last moment in any situation, the Hoca creates an explanation which brings himself into the right and his accuser into the wrong. Nasreddin Hoca's brain can outdo any brawn; his naivete reveals a sagacity beyond that of his own people (Burrill, 1970: 7-8). No matter how contrary the Hoca sounds, he always has a complete grasp on the true importance and meaning of a situation. As the Trickster, Nasreddin Hoca can create social values through his actions, without believing in those values himself. It takes someone outside of the belief system to show others what they should value or believe in.

Using metaphorical language, the Hoca narratives often set up binary oppositions--politically, socially, and with religion. While the oppositions teach lessons about behavior, the Hoca does not always follow these rules. He inconsistently moves back and forth between both sides of the opposition, depending on the lesson he teaches. One of the main oppositions is between the left and right, representing evil and good. In other instances the left is symbolically associated with revolution. Often in the narratives the revolt is against laws or other restraints to the freedom of the individual. In Turkish culture the distinction between left and right is still a powerful binary opposition (Karabas, 1993: 50-1).

The following anecdote in particular illustrates this opposition.

It was getting dark in the room when Nasreddin Hoca's wife said, "There's a lantern on your left, Hoca. Hand it to me please, so I can light it."

"How can I tell which is my left side in the dark?"

Nasreddin Hoca answered. (Muallimoglu, 1986: 36)

That is to say, without proper knowledge/light one cannot know how to correctly act; one cannot know in which direction to align allegiances. The Nasreddin Hoca narratives often demonstrate a lack of allegiance to anyone except oneself, which is the typical behavior of a trickster. It also reflects the constraints of the time period in which they are set. The Turks were under occupation by a foreign government toward which they felt no allegiance, yet they could not organize solidarity among themselves either. It is through the Hoca narratives that the people learn a code for how to behave. His metaphorical

language teaches morality to a group of oppressed Turks.

### *The Political Philosophy of Nasreddin Hoca*

The Hoca was on his way to the market-place and found himself surrounded by children. Each of them said: "Buy me a whistle." And the Hoca replied: "All right, all right." Then, one of the children gave the Hoca some money and said: "Hoca, buy me a whistle with this." The Hoca said: "All right." to him, as well. That evening, when the Hoca came back from the market, he handed a whistle to the child that had given him the money. When the others asked: "What about ours?" the Hoca replied: "He who pays the money blows the whistle." (Muallimoglu, 1986: xi)

When it comes to politics, Nasreddin Hoca's neighbors were always asking him to intervene to the governor on their behalf or asking the Hoca himself to settle their disputes. In the above narrative, the children ask the Hoca to buy the whistles and expect him to pay for them. The lesson, of course, is that those who make an investment in something they want, either through action, faith, or monetary, will be the first to reap the benefits. "He who pays the money blows the whistle" is an idiom in today's Turkish.

While the Hoca never proclaimed that in the absence of knowledge/light, one should tend to the left, in the 1950s the Soviets made a film using the Hoca as a proletarian hero. Supposedly his stories were used to depict him leading a struggle against the capitalist establishment (Muallimoglu, 1986: xi). This is, in fact, contrary to many of the Trickster's lessons of "every man for himself" which is taught to children in the lesson of the whistles. The Hoca narratives reveal that

with a little ingenuity and cleverness, one can acquire free food, favors at the bathhouse, invitations to feasts, and reconciliation of debts. His philosophy, which extends from the social sphere into the informal and formal political realms, is to work any existing system to your benefit. In the absence of knowledge/light, this is how one survives.

### *The Immortal Hoca*

On being asked his age, Nasreddin Hoca said, "Forty."  
 "But, Hoca, that's what you said last year!"  
 "That's right. I'm a man of my word. I always stick to what I say." (Muallimoglu, 1986: 78)

There will always be groups on the periphery in Turkish society, groups that are oppressed, who in humorous conversation or in reality, use Nasreddin Hoca narratives as justification for their actions. The tradition of these narratives is more than five hundred years strong. In the past, leaders have tried in the span of decades to undermine the authority of the Trickster. In the end, the Hoca wins out because of his familiarity with human nature and Turkish folk culture. Today Nasreddin Hoca can be found in comic books, children's books, on *ayran* cups at *bufe*, and in everyday idioms. He is close to his people and remains so as a teacher and a comedian.

## MUSTAFA KEMAL ATATURK

The birth date of Mustafa is equally uncertain (Fig. 2). Official historians place the date as March 1, 1881 in Salonika. Mustafa's mother in two separate interviews placed the date during two separate times of the year. Mustafa himself didn't know the exact date. He officially declared his birth date to be May 19, the date he landed in Samsun to begin the fight for Anatolia, the heartland of Turkey. This initiative to make changes to circumstances and information was a trend throughout his entire life. Even his name acquired additions as he gained notoriety. As a young student, a math teacher added to his name the word 'Kemal'--which means 'perfection' (Orga, 1962: 10). As a General he acquired the title of *Gazi* (Destroyer of the Christians). And later on, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey bestowed on him the surname Ataturk, meaning "Father of the Turks."

Despite a perfection in his intellect and discipline, during his early years his superiors generally disliked him, and his peers turned away from his egoism. Like Nasreddin Hoca, he offered his opinion and advice on virtually any subject. However, unlike the Hoca, no one took him seriously until much later in his life when he became a feared demagogue and leader of the Turkish Republic.



**Fig. 2. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**

Source: Postcard printed by Keskin Color Kartpostalcılık Limited Şirketi, İstanbul.<sup>1</sup>



### *The Savior Arrives*

The mist has fallen on top of the mountain; the silver stream, unceasing, runs; the sun is entering the world on the horizon, let us march on, my friends. (Volkan, 1984: 132)

Mustafa Kemal arrived at Samsun on May 19, 1919 to begin a campaign fired by awakened Turkish nationalism against the Greek invasion of the Anatolian heartland. While the wit of Nasreddin Hoca inspires a cultural nationalism in the hearts of Turkish people, Ataturk used emotion and military triumphs to unite the nation. He traveled from Samsun to Erzurum to test his authority with the people against the authority of the Sultan. Along the way, he organized local military conferences to rally the people against the Sultan and the invading Allies. The Swedish song above became the theme song at this time for the deliverance of the Turkish people. The song signifies Mustafa Kemal's awakening as the savior of the oppressed nation. He is the sun on the horizon, making its way across Anatolia to touch each of the Turks with the light of nationalism and knowledge. It is after this arrival in Samsun that the Turkish people began to consider Mustafa Kemal as one of their own.

Mustafa Kemal made grand arrivals at numerous cities in Anatolia-- Erzurum, Sivas, Amasya. The biographer S.S. Aydemir noted that even the Ankara newspaper reported Ataturk's arrival in characteristically apocalyptic terms: "The dawn of this daylight-creating sun took place in Erzurum. Glistening in Sivas, it illuminated the nation. Every place opened its heart and should to that

sun of reality. The Turkish world was turned entirely into a single mass of radiance" (Volkan, 1984: 150). Mustafa Kemal had finally begun to bring the knowledge/light that the Turkish people had been looking for in the tales of Nasreddin Hoca.

Yet another addition to Mustafa Kemal's identity is that of the Gray Wolf. A Turkish legend describes a tribe trapped in a valley for many generations. One day, a gray wolf appeared, and the people followed it out of the valley to the outside world. After pushing the Greeks out of the country and finally arriving in Izmir, on the shores of the Aegean Sea, Mustafa Kemal became known as the Gray Wolf, leading the Turkish people out of the entrapment of the past and into modernity (Volkan, 1984: 200).

Unlike Nasreddin Hoca, Mustafa Kemal's leadership came less out of the population than out of his own imagination and desires. As father/creator of Turkey, he called together a Foundation to investigate the origins of Turkish civilization and culture. This Foundation postulated a theory that the early Turkish people had given rise to all the great civilizations of the world. Not only did this theory serve to boost Turkish nationalism and confidence, but it also allowed for the borrowing "back" of various aspects of Western civilization (Volkan, 1984: 184). Just as the sociologist Ziya Gokalp often insisted, Ataturk believed a nation should remain strong in culture to exist. Civilization without a culture developed from its own people is too weak to survive. Ataturk sought to combine the two by eliminating the recent past from the memory of contemporary Turks and

reminding them of a past they had never really known, a homogeneous culture created by the government.

### *Political Philosophy of Ataturk*

"Turkish Youth! Your primary duty is ever to preserve and defend the National independence, the Turkish Republic.

That is the only basis of your existence and your future. This basis contains your most precious treasure . . . it might happen that the nation came into complete privation, into the most extreme distress; that it found itself in a condition of ruin and complete exhaustion.

Even under those circumstances, O Turkish child of future generations! It is your duty to save the independence, the Turkish Republic.

*The strength you will need for this is mighty in the noble blood which flows in your veins.*  
(Volkan, 1984: 279-80)

Ataturk invoked nationalism within the Turkish people by giving them innate importance and nobility, giving superiority to one type of culture within Turkey. He inspired them to take initiative for the good of the nation and local communities. One of his own points of nationalism, or Kemalism, is that of revolution. Ataturk set a glorious example of revolution for the people to follow, yet realized and emphasized that there are certain borders which must be observed in creating and remaining a strong nation. Ataturk realized that one of his greatest battles as leader of the Turkish people was against the common resignation to a power outside of their control.

After having labored in the field for hours, the Hoca grew tired and sat down beneath a great walnut tree. He looked at the tiny walnuts in the tree, and then at the huge pumpkins in the field. Then he began to talk to himself: "One can't question on God's doings, but in this case, things are certainly the wrong way around. Those pumpkins are bigger than my head but they grow on ever-so-thin vines. Those walnuts, on the other hand, seem minute when compared with the huge tree from which they hang." Just at that moment, a walnut fell down right on the Hoca's head. The Hoca lifted up his hands in prayer and said: "Forgive me, O God. I'll never question thy doings. Just imagine what would have happened if walnuts had been as big as pumpkins!" (Karabas, 1996: 16)

The Nasreddin Hoca narrative above from Tokmakcioglu instructs people to not question the workings of the world. Ataturk begged people to question their situations and to understand the consequences of taking action for change. He struggled to inspire in the people of Turkey a sense of responsibility to maintain independence for the entire nation.

Questioning, however, can lead to the desire for individual exceptions, which Ataturk detested in the general population. While at times he himself expected to be treated as an exception, as a rule, he encouraged the people to follow his words and not his example. Ataturk's plan of action for the people was to unite as a nation and to act as members of a community, rather than as individuals, as noted in this section from Afetinan.

Naturally, everyone wants to have within his society the happiest, easiest, and sweetest aspects of life, but the strong think little of the weak. As a result, it is impossible to live in harmony, tranquility, security, and

order. Thus, the principles of law . . . make it possible for people to be helpful to one another, and to respect one another, to bring order instead of fighting. No one can demand a right outside the established border. (Volkan, 1984: 300)

The borders that Ataturk promoted to remain at peace are in the everyday encounters with fellow citizens and on the national level. In this speech, he attempts to eliminate in Turkish people the tendency to look for individual exceptions. This would include bribery, bargaining, and justifying one's illegal activities. If the nation itself was threatened, however, then the "noble blood" of the Turkish people would naturally ignite themselves into battle.

To cement the unity of the nation, Ataturk created cultural education that would usher in a modern civilization and an improved economic, social and political life (Latimer, 1966: 183). The culture which he introduced was a blend of carefully chosen Turkish and Western components. Outlawed and neglected in this process were religious schools, the mystical sects of dervishes, classical Ottoman music, and the many different minority cultures present within Turkey's boundaries. In place of the schools he introduced an education system based on that of the French. The new music was jazz and Western European classical. He himself traveled around the country to teach the people how to use the Latin alphabet rather than Ottoman script, how to act on their nationalism, and to take pride in their newly co-opted Turkish heritage.

*The Immortal Father*

There are two Mustafa Kemals. One of them is he who stands before you, the Mustafa Kemal of flesh and blood who will pass away. There is another though whom I cannot call 'me,' for it is not I whom this Mustafa Kemal personifies. It is you, all of you here present, who will go to the furthestmost ends of the country and inculcate the ideal which must be defended with your lives . . . it is a new mode of thought we are considering, and I stand for these dreams of yours--my life's work is to make them come true . . . (Orga, 1962: 298)

In this speech, Ataturk tells the people that they are in him and he is in them. Even in death, he will live on within them. It took Turkey more than a decade to give its father his final burial in a mausoleum in Ankara. The country was in shock and sought to keep him alive however possible. Today Ataturk can be found on currency, at every school as a statue, in offices and restaurants in portraits, and in formal and informal politics.

While Nasreddin Hoca remains alive in stories and idioms, Ataturk exists as a visual reminder in his statues, busts, and words inscribed on walls. The reminders of Ataturk assume there is no longer any blindness, both physical and metaphorical. The stories of the Hoca, however, are passed on to those with and without knowledge or vision. That is why the superstition and individualism that Ataturk attempted to defeat lives on in the hearts of the Turkish people, struggling to unite with the Republican ideals of nationhood.

### The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD)

Caught between the forces of the Trickster and the Savior, DHKD struggles, like the sociologist Gokalp, to blend both the tradition of Turkey and the Western thinking of Ataturk and conservationists. The group's activities reflect attempts at control as well as frustrated surrenders to Hoca-logic. The staff are themselves engaged in a balancing act between their opinions and the organization's goals of achieving conservation and balance between people and nature (Fig. 3).

The organization is composed of about twenty full-time staff members, the majority of which are women, including the Executive Director. Three staff members are from Western European nations. Memberships range between twelve and thirteen thousand across the country. Membership fees contribute approximately 11% to the total budget of the organization. Approximately 50% of DHKD's funding is national; the remainder comes from foreign foundations, governments, and institutions. National funds are from banks, private donors, and big industry such as Coca-cola. While the organization is national, the main office is located in Istanbul with three project site offices--Dalyan, the Goksu Delta, and Trabzon.

My analysis of DHKD's struggle for balance begins with a look at the environmental problems along the Mediterranean coast and Dorganization's reaction. Local perception of the organization is of a powerful, manipulative force with the ability to change the government and people's lives. The organization's

successes and failures, however, reflect a folk background like the Hoca with the tools and determination of Ataturk.

One of the major conservation tools used by DHKD is education at all levels. The three main approaches--formal education, campaigns, and random distribution of materials--have the potential to reach a large portion of the population. The programs that DHKD puts together do not always reach very far into the population at all, though. In some cases, accomplishments such as having distributed more than one million posters nationally, are only cosmetic and not educational. The presence of the posters across Anatolia are similar to Ataturk's ever present visage at all places of business and in front of schools. He still watches over his people, but he is no longer teaching.

DHKD's insufficiency at organizing consistent and thorough education could lie in the heart of the organization--in the opinions of the staff members themselves. In the final chapter, I will analyze comments from staff about where they think education is needed in Turkey and what subjects need to be taught. Their answers reveal internal struggles that mirror those occurring on the streets and in project areas. Some staff members' abhorrence toward folk philosophy could mean that they often use Hoca-logic themselves. And Ataturk-will could just signal a tendency toward fascism.





Fig. 3. The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD), Summer 1996

## Chapter Two

A neighbor came up to Nasreddin Hoca and complained that there was no sunlight in his house. "Is there any sunlight in your garden?" Hoca asked. "Yes, certainly," replied the man. "Then move your house into your garden!" Hoca said. (Muallimoglu, 1986: 79)

Reports and rumors from across the country echo the Hoca's logic. A town in a Black Sea valley plagued by vitamin D deficiency and rickets somehow removes the top of a mountain blocking the sunlight. Peaceful beaches known for their sand dunes are bull-dozed away, the salty sand used for construction of nearby second homes that are rarely visited. Developers of resorts built on long stretches of beaches, cement over the sand and put in swimming pools. Wetlands are drained to provide more land for agriculture that has been crowded out of its suitable area by tourism.

Environmental problems along Turkey's Mediterranean coast are indicative of the influence of Hoca-logic nationwide. Analyzing DHKD's response to this logic reveals an organization hardening into the mold of Ataturk's rationalism while battling the rapid development and pressure of the tourism industry, both of which are driven by Hoca-logic.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that in 1994, close to six million people arrived in Turkey, the majority as tourists. The Eastern

Mediterranean region has been rapidly altered as the residents leave their traditional ways and migrate from the villages to the coastline to make a living at hotels, souvenir shops, restaurants, discos, and boat tourism outfits. The Turkish Prime Ministry Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade reports that agricultural exports contributed only \$2.3 billion to the Turkish economy in 1995. The agricultural sector has diminished remarkably in its contribution to the GDP in the past twenty years--from 35% in 1970 to 16.4% in 1995 ("Agriculture", 1996). The culture of Mediterranean villages changes completely with the shift from agriculture to service, and the people organize around new ideologies to maintain their new lifestyle. In some of the major tourist developments, it is difficult to recognize Turkey. Jeremy Seals, a travel writer, wrote of his experience with the effect of such a rapid shift in way of life. In the following passage he is in the resort town of Side, near Antalya.

The truth was that far from being fairly representative of Turkey, Pomegranate [Side] was unrecognizable as such. Pomegranate had tried to drag the Turkish hinterland into the modern world and not yet turned around to discover that under a strain that could not be borne the towrope had long since broken. (Seals, 1996: 14)

The national government is also pushing to develop. Turkey bills tourism as an alternative to industrial development. The government attempts to exchange the destructiveness of factories for the relaxed appearance of tourism. The Hoca narrative recorded by Golpinarli below is an example of this rhetoric.

The Hoca loaded some firewood on his donkey's back. Then, he mounted the donkey, standing

straight up. When the children saw the Hoca going along like that, they began to laugh. One of them asked the Hoca why he wasn't sitting down. The Hoca replied: "Not only is he carrying my load of firewood, but he's relieving me of the need to walk. Considering the load on his back, wouldn't it be sinful for me to sit down and add to it?" (Karabas, 1996: 15).

The Hoca-logic of tourism is fueled by its importance to the economy. The tourism revenues for 1994 were over \$4 billion. Tourism is rapidly turning into a government protected tradition within the Turkish economy. Manipulating tradition for environmental protection can often be dangerous and lead to division between local people and NGOs.

### *Reacting Against Hoca Logic on the Mediterranean Coast*

Although DHKD was founded in 1975, it wasn't until 1986 that the group became a recognized national figurehead for the conservation movement. At this time a joint Turkish-German development group proposed a resort on a Dalyan beach critical for nesting marine turtles. Without first organizing within the Dalyan-Koycegiz community, DHKD lobbied the government in Ankara and stopped the development. The organization's success turned the local people against environmental protection and reactionary conservationists. This animosity continues today. One staff member at DHKD claims that men from the Dalyan boat cooperative assaulted him outside the local bus station. He believes it was because he is a conservation worker from Istanbul, an outsider. Jealousy of his

foreign girlfriend could also have helped fuel the aggression. To help bridge the problems of environmental protection in a hostile community, the national government created the Agency for the Protection of Special Areas (APSA) to manage Dalyan and other nearby regions as protected special areas.

Other areas along the Eastern Mediterranean were not being protected, however, and encroaching development in the Goksu Delta triggered DHKD into action once again. On a trip to the Delta for bird watching in the late 1980s, staff and members discovered a major second home construction project in process. Tourism develops where nature, culture and history have been preserved together; these three are the basic roots for development, but their protection is often forgotten once industrial tourism begins. The Goksu Delta area still holds on to its past and simple lifestyle with the exception of a few major developments. Tasucu, a town located on the Delta, is an ancient port on the Mediterranean and today has ferry service to North Cyprus. Agriculture has also thrived in the region for centuries, and the people who still live on the Delta harvest its abundant bird and fish resources.

The second home development project threatened to crowd out the livelihood of the local people and destroy the habitat of migrating birds and nesting sea turtles. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that second homes constitute 32% of land use along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. Many of these second homes remain empty for indeterminable amounts of time. They are built as an escape from the crowded cities, but they also serve as a stable

investment amidst rapid inflation and devalued currency. DHKD once again lobbied in Ankara, and the government declared the undeveloped remainder of the Delta a PSA in March 1990 (Fig. 4).

While DHKD's reactionary efforts slowly pay off in local alliances and the preservation of several species and their habitats, the reactionary approach of these outsiders seriously alienates the local people. Atatürk cautioned against thinking like the Hoca and acting on emotion when he said, "They make decisions in haste or anger or expediency, and such decisions can bear only rotten fruit . . . These men have no vision. They see events only in relation to their own limited years." (Orga, 1962: 221) In these two instances, DHKD responded in much the same way as the developers who intended to manipulate the beaches--without planning to alleviate some of the distress of local impact. The Hoca is fond of justifying his actions after the fact, and it seems that DHKD is doing the same, particularly in Dalyan. The organization realizes that this major success in conservation is also a failure in public relations. To make amends with local people, DHKD provides workshops and panel discussions about management of PSAs, English language courses, and eco-tourism alternatives for those who migrate from villages to tourism centers.



Fig. 4. Goksu Delta, Protected Special Area Sign, July 1996

### *The Hoca Infiltrates the Government*

The government itself sets a reactive example in its environmental regulation and enforcement. Turkey signed on to several international conventions that remain mainly on paper with little enforcement.<sup>1</sup> National regulations include the requirement of Environmental Impact Assessments, maintenance and protection of national parks, and protection of water quality for both humans, plants and animals. Because these regulations are rarely enforced, most of the conservation work is being carried out at local levels by NGOs. The Ministry of Environment supports the efforts of the NGOs but refuses to involve itself any further except with projects that boost the government's image. DHKD once invited several government ministers to a presentation about the organization's work and the immensity of Turkey's environmental problems. After the presentation, the officials told DHKD to keep up the good work and then left.

One of the Ministry of Environment's flimsy creations is the slogan "Turkiye'nin Sev, Yesil Koru" (Love Turkey, Protect Green) which appears on signs at picnic areas and along roadways all over the country. The message is almost as prevalent as a portrait of Ataturk. A staff member at DHKD called the phrase "chewing gum in the mouth" because it is simple to memorize but not enough to think about. It also attempts to pacify those who say the country isn't doing enough. While most people know this message, there is no "How" to it. If

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<sup>1</sup> Turkey signed on to these conventions: Ramsar (wetland protection), Bern (wildlife protection), Washington (rare species protection), Barcelona (Mediterranean Sea protection), and Rio (sustainable development). The Turkish Ministry of Environment adopted sustainable development as its guiding principle in policy making.



people did want to protect green as the government instructs, they would have to find their own starting point and outlets for action. There are ways, however, that people can cause a disruption. Regardless of fines or regulations, the Turks oppose government. Almost every sphere of life is politicized and people show their opposition through black markets, tax evasion, mafia involvement and other activities which undermine the top-heavy national government (Ergil, 1996).

NGOs are forced to engage in the proactive work that the government refuses to do. The organized work of some NGOs is an outlet for citizens to create a disruption, though this activity is still relying on the reactionary Hoca logic that is prevalent in destructive behavior. An example is the difficulty of protecting endangered birds in a country with approximately five million hunters. In the Protected Special Areas (PSA), where hunting is prohibited, there is no enforcement of regulations to protect the birds. In the Goksu Delta PSA, the local DHKD staff sometimes drives among the tall reeds in the Delta blowing a whistle to scare away the illegal hunters. Because the hunters can't see the DHKD jeep, they think they've been caught by wardens and run out of the area while the whistlers watch through binoculars. DHKD is like the child in a previous Nasreddin Hoca narrative who gave the Hoca money to buy a whistle when all the other children wanted the whistles for free. Since DHKD invested so much time in the Delta, they have a right to "blow the whistle."

### *Hardening into the Ataturk Mold*

From their experience in Dalyan, DHKD realized a coastal inventory needed to be done to determine which beaches were used by *Caretta caretta* and the less common green turtle *Chelonia mydas*. This is a measure to monitor and prevent the future over-development of the areas. Seventeen important turtle nesting areas were identified along Turkey's coasts. Unfortunately, the majority of these important beaches are found near prime tourist areas on the Eastern Mediterranean (Appendix A). Included in the protection of these areas are several sub-projects to promote the sustainable use of coastlines overall. The capacity building activities in the Dalyan region are an example. Surveys of the people in Dalyan and the surrounding villages identified their needs and hopes for the community. DHKD attempts to help them meet these goals through English language courses, encouraging production of local handicrafts for income, and identifying ways to earn money through eco-tourism. The community is also included in discussions on management of the area.

The inventory of the turtle areas is a successful way to monitor areas and contribute to Environmental Impact Assessments in development projects. The Bird Section at DHKD also used inventories when creating a comprehensive list of Important Bird Areas (IBAs). These internationally important IBAs are mainly wetlands and shallow lakes and are part of a global IBA network organized by British Bird Life International. Ninety-seven IBAs, the majority located in the Central Anatolia region, have been identified and are being monitored by DHKD

staff and members. Monitoring the areas involves inventory and identifying the need for projects to help minimize the impact of human activities such as industry, tourism, agriculture and hunting.

A crucial part of the Important Areas projects, for both turtles and birds, is informing the public about the areas' importance in the preservation of many plant and animal species. Several types of migrating birds of prey, the Dalmatian pelican, and the slender-billed curlew are all protected in the IBAs. The tall reed habitat of the wetlands, which is a nesting area for many birds, is managed to lessen the impacts of harvesting. DHKD attempts to show the connection between the health of the ecosystem and the health of the humans living around it. Education through posters and books is a key component and will be addressed in-depth later.

By identifying the important areas on a large scale, before they have been developed, DHKD is employing the strategic and pro-active thinking promoted by Ataturk. Unfortunately, Ataturk was famous for the way he would alienate even his closest friends and loved ones if they didn't agree with him. Aydemir, a biographer of Ataturk, reveals one of the leader's diary entries as being particularly alienating.

"Why, after my years of education, after studying civilization and the socialization processes, after spending my life and my time to gain pleasure from freedom, should I descend to the level of common people? I will make them rise to my level. Let me not resemble them; they should resemble me."  
(Volkan, 1984: 104)

DHKD has matured into the model of Ataturk's careful future-oriented planning. They are on the verge of entering into his desire to elevate the population of Turkey. By promoting and educating for an understanding of sustainable use and ecosystem management, DHKD will be giving the people of Turkey tools for their future. To actually give the people the tools, however, DHKD needs to step away from Ataturk's model. His leadership was characterized by absolute control over all aspects of economic and social life. DHKD will need to let the local people have the control in conservation. The organization is slowly learning how to dissolve the feelings of alienation. DHKD as an organization rose out of Hoca-logic and can be an example for local people to follow.

## Chapter Three

A survey conducted by the DHKD Education Section revealed that the majority of staff view environmental education as a tool rather than an objective in their work.<sup>2</sup> One response summed up the opinions of many that environmental education "should explain to children/ public/groups *why* behavioral change is desired" and that the education should be integrated into all aspects of formal and informal instruction. The Education Section employs environmental education both as a tool and as an objective, first as a tool to touch people, and then, once the people believe in the value of Turkey's natural life and the importance of sustaining that belief, environmental education will be an objective achieved.

According to the former DHKD Education director, Esin Uslu, people in Turkey often ask why DHKD cares about turtles and birds rather than air pollution and garbage. Esin claimed that people only worry about problems that affect them directly and don't consider the connection between habitat health, habitat loss, and people. The government has compounded this problem by putting together its own supplemental environmental education text titled *Environment, Health, Traffic and Reading*. The environment section is mainly about how to stay healthy and safe in a city. Because of the government's view on health and the environment, in class rooms the vital link between humans and other species is never made.

DHKD has three major education techniques of its own to prevent

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<sup>2</sup> This survey was prepared by the former Education Section director, Esin Uslu. 12 December 1995. Not all staff members responded.

environmental degradation: formal education, campaigns, and random distribution of materials. Although DHKD attempts to prevent the environmental problems associated with Hoca-logic, the organization itself is engaged in reactionary and disorganized education projects. Formal education is the patient attempt at effecting slow change in the entire population. Ataturk abolished the Ottoman and religious schools in Turkey and established a National Education system to create homogeneous, well-adjusted people. The result is that many people learn only what they will be tested on at the end of the year. These final exams are extremely important. If a student fails the same exam twice, s/he could be asked to leave school. For this reason, it is more practical to memorize than to hypothesize. DHKD is trying to work with the Ministry of Education to both incorporate environmental education questions on the students' final exams as well as to retrain teachers to teach students how to think intuitively.

Campaigns tend to be short battles with an old problem. Ataturk's campaigns to rally public support to defend Anatolia from the Greeks inflamed the population to unite. DHKD's campaigns are against local rather than national threats and tend to inspire frustration and bitterness rather than the famed Turkish nationalism.

Random distribution of materials is afterthought on the part of DHKD, not the future-oriented thinking they themselves claim to promote. Ataturk was methodical in his country-wide travels to transform traditional attitudes and fashions into more Western and modern versions. The backlash from Ataturk's

lifestyle-altering reforms continues. Traditional dress among women is returning as is conservative Islam. The renewed popularity of Islam should signal to DHKD and other organizations new trends for them to follow in terms of programming and education.

*Formal Education: Teaching People to Believe Without Incentive*

The Hoca borrowed a cauldron from his neighbor. After using it, he put a saucepan in it and took it back to his neighbor. When the neighbor saw the saucepan, he asked: "What's this?" The Hoca said: "The cauldron must have been pregnant. It gave birth to this saucepan." "Fine," said the man and took back the cauldron together with the saucepan.

The Hoca again borrowed the cauldron after a while. But this time he did not return it. A rather long time passed and the neighbor came to the Hoca's house and demanded the cauldron. The Hoca spoke sadly: "Oh, my neighbor, may God grant you long life, the cauldron passed away." The neighbor said: "Come on Hoca, how can a cauldron die?" The Hoca said: "My dear neighbor, you believed that it gave birth, why can't you believe that it died?" (Karabas, 1996: 53)

DHKD's attempt at formal environmental education is in the form of a supplemental text called "Friends of the Planet" which was prepared by Earth Generations and sponsored by Proctor and Gamble. The text is for 4th & 5th grades and covers air and water quality, garbage and biodiversity. Earth Generations, an American organization, collected Turkish textbooks and translated them into English. From these materials, they created a supplemental

text for environmental education with curriculum links to the Turkish texts. The supplement was then translated back into Turkish. Unfortunately, the style of “Friends of the Planet” doesn’t match the Turkish teaching style of straight lecture and memorization, and the text is still only a supplement.

DHKD would like to reach students in all schools across the country, but realizes there are major differences between private and public schools. Western-style environmental education, like “Friends of the Planet”, would fit in well at most private schools. In fact, many of these schools already have environmental education. The public schools have more trouble adjusting their curriculums to include environmental education because the National Education requirements have already overloaded the teachers.

One of the private schools that has managed to administer environmental education in a flexible curriculum gave a presentation at the Habitat II NGO Forum. A teacher from Marmara College, a private English school, presented the success story of the environmental education program being used there. The values and connections emphasized were based on empathy for other humans’ needs rather than biodiversity. For example, deforestation is linked to leukemia medication, and furniture in orphanages is connected to recycling of juice boxes. The school uses British environmental education materials while still incorporating all the topics required by the Turkish Ministry of Education. The curriculum also includes an action component for older students to work with environmental organizations. Volunteering with the organizations teaches the students how to



organize and teach other children about environmental issues and solutions to problems.

Through the National Education system Ataturk wanted "generality and equality" to be emphasized (*National Education*, 1994: 5) and for the population to learn to "respect others" (7). All this he wanted accomplished in a secular fashion. But the Ministry of Education, in speaking about National Environmental Education at a conference in Germany, stated that environmental education is meant to talk about the "significance attached to the environmental pollution in Islam . . . [and to explain] the significance attached to the love of trees in Islam" (*Environmental Education*, 1994: 13).

The statement also describes environmental education in Turkey as educating citizens about their constitutional right to a healthy environment and their responsibility to resolve any problems (15). It goes on to emphasize a necessity for people to think of their responsibility to future generations; this is meant to inspire action toward improvement of the present state of the environment (16). Esin said that these words mean nothing because they have not been incorporated into the mission of National Education.

With help from the Ministry of Education, it would be easier to facilitate the follow-up to many of DHKD's in-school education projects, particularly if the government created an incentive for teachers to evaluate the materials. Unfortunately, as in the Hoca narrative from Golpinarli above, even the Ministry of Education itself will not believe in or help with environmental education without

incentive. Because of this refusal, there is still no mandatory environmental education.

Until then, DHKD could use more staff to perform the tasks the teachers would normally do. The organization receives many requests to give presentations in classrooms all over the country, but the travel is too expensive and time-consuming for a section staffed by one person. The field offices at project sites are even less equipped and funded to travel to schools beyond the immediate district. With help and support from the government, DHKD would also be able to develop Turkish environmental education materials that are better suited to the schools.

The books that DHKD creates are intentionally very striking to catch the attention of a group of people more accustomed to listening to stories. Many of DHKD's brochures and pamphlets target local people at project sites but DHKD staff are uncertain if they really read them. According to Esin, people generally do not like reading. As in the early Turkish history, oral traditions are much stronger than literature.

Dalyan area teachers, in collaboration with DHKD, created one of the books that DHKD uses in education projects. The picture book uses foreign tourists as speakers to show the Turkish children the value of the area they live in. The tourists express envy because there are so many resources in Dalyan. Esin believes that Turkish people tend to take what they have for granted, thinking that there are a lot of resources because they see so many in their locality. Esin

believes it takes an outsider's interest and concern to get the Turkish people to start valuing what they have.

*Campaigns: The Difference Between Baklava and Conservation*

A scientist came to Aksehir and told the people he saw that he wanted to meet the most knowledgeable person among them. They introduced him to the Hoca.

The scientist drew a circle on the ground with the stick in his hand. The Hoca divided this circle into two equal parts by drawing a line across it. The scientist drew a line from the middle of that line perpendicular to it. The Hoca motioned with his hands as if he would take three of the four parts of the circle thus formed. He also motioned as if he were pushing the remaining part away from himself and giving it to the scientist. Keeping his fingers straight, the scientist held the palm of one of his hands towards the earth and shook it a few times. The Hoca did the exact opposite. Finally, they went away from each other.

The scientist said to the people of Aksehir: "You indeed have a fine scientist. I told him that people say the earth is round, and asked him what he thinks about that. He added that the equator is in the middle of the earth. I divided the earth into four, and he added that three fourths of it is water and one fourth land. I asked the cause of the rain that comes down from the sky, and he said waters evaporate on account of heat and then come down as rain. He is very knowledgeable indeed."

The people of Aksehir then asked the Hoca what had happened. His reply was: "The fellow is an absolute glutton. He said he wished there was a round tray of baklava. I said I wouldn't let him eat it all by himself, and told him that I wanted half of it. He asked what I would do if we divided the baklava into four. I told him that I would eat three fourths of it and give him one fourth. He asked how it would be if we put nuts and raisins on it. I said that would be fine, but that the fire

had to be strong, since the baklava would not bake well with a weak fire. He was defeated and went away."  
(Karabas, 1996: 57)

Among residents of the Black Sea coast and the surrounding mountains, falconry is a very old tradition. The people in this area capture falcons from the wild using red-backed shrikes as bait. Because of the number of years and frequency of the capture, some types of falcons along the Black Sea coast are becoming rare. The captor then raises the falcon as a pet. Not only are the falcons stolen from their natural habitat, but once in captivity they are treated poorly or forgotten. The falcons are kept in cages and sometimes set free many years after being captured. Once free, the bird usually dies of starvation or freezes in the winter, having missed or not noticed the migration of other falcons.

DHKD began its North East Education Project to help save the falcons. During the month-long campaign, 250 villages were visited. A book was prepared for the children and an interactive slide presentation was given at the schools. It talked about human impact on nature and solutions to the associated problems. During an interactive slide presentation, educators showed a photo of a coal mine as an example of environmental degradation. When the presenters rhetorically asked the children if they would like a coal mine to come in and develop the area, most said, "Yes!" Their response shows a lack of sense of place among the children, and most likely among the parents as well. The story book is meant to teach children to empathize with birds and nature, particularly in the Black Sea region. The North East Education project, however, wasn't continuous and

included no follow-up.

When DHKD visits these areas, without conducting evaluations or surveys to understand public opinion and simply tries to change behavior, the two groups could be talking about the earth and baklava. The Nasreddin Hoca narrative above reveals that when strangers come to town, self-interest has a tendency to prevail--at least after the conservationists leave. "It's dangerous to mess with tradition," Esin said. She expressed concern that the month-long visit was not effective because of the lack of follow-up and evaluation.

The North East Education Project reveals a striking difference in the meaning of outsider. If the books in Dalyan encourage student to respect their surroundings because outsiders do, why is it so difficult for DHKD staff (outsiders) to arrive in a town to teach the same values? Numerous reasons are possible. Perhaps Turks respect foreigners more than fellow Turks, as is evidenced in hospitality toward tourists. Esin believes that respect for foreigners arises out of an inferiority complex toward Western nations and a desire to be more like Europeans. It seems here that Ataturk's message for Turks to "Respect others" has been combined with his promotion of the West. The Turks have turned their leader's lessons into one: Respect Westerners.

*Random Distribution of Materials: Assumption that Something Local Can Be Fixed by Something External*

The Hoca woke up in the middle of a dream. "Oh my wife," he said, "give me my glasses. I'm having a nice dream, but I can't see it clearly." (Karabas, 1996: 40)

DHKD has distributed over one million of its posters in Turkey. The staff typically distributes materials and posters when they are visiting a conservation site, hosting a meeting or doing an education project. Target recipients are children, village managers, and coffee houses--a place where men spend many hours during hot days. The staff at DHKD proudly claims that their bird hunting poster can be found in almost every Anatolian coffee shop.

Every once in a while DHKD stops along roads to talk to groups and distribute materials. This method is heavily used by the Bird Section and is only a one-time event without follow-up. This random visit is less effective than campaigns because it doesn't even attempt to activate the public. Like Ataturk's reforms on head wear, the appearance of the coffee shop changes but the opinions and values do not.

This past summer I was along on one of these spontaneous educational trips. A group of us from the Goksu Delta DHKD office drove from the coast into the dry hills to visit some ruins at Uzuncaburc and eat lunch. We drove by ancient Roman city gates in a region where only villages and scattered houses remained. We ate lunch at a trout restaurant on a tiny stream in a shaded valley. The restaurant was next to an old grist mill, built of stones from the ruins. After lunch we drove up to the dusty village of Uzuncaburc which was within the ruins of a former Roman city. It was a clear, hot day, and the coffee house, located across from the four remaining pillars of a colonnaded street, was crowded. After briefly walking up to the Temple of Zeus and back, DHKD staff headed to the

coffee house with posters from the back of the jeep (Fig. 5). True to the organization's claims, the coffee shop did already have a hunting poster. It hung in the back, in a dark corner, over a refrigerated cooler. Meanwhile, out on the street, two other DHKD staff were handing out books to children who cautiously wandered by (Fig. 6). After these brief educational moments, we headed back to the beach for a swim.

The Hoca narrative above, from Golpinarli, makes fun of the Hoca for assuming that he can improve his dream vision by wearing his glasses while he sleeps. By attempting to fix an internal problem in his dream with something physical on the exterior, the Hoca is being no more illogical than people who assume that an outsider knows what is best for an unfamiliar community. Materials developed in Istanbul and handed out to communities across the nation are not necessarily effective just because they are omnipresent. Esin believes that people enjoy receiving and displaying the beautiful posters, but only because they could be used as wall decoration.

By distributing materials across the country to the smallest of Anatolian villages, DHKD is mirroring Ataturk's own attempts to reach folk and create change in attitude. The revolt which Ataturk led against the Greek invasion rose out of these Anatolian villages. DHKD has the potential to inspire a village revolt against environmental degradation. Ataturk's example shows that it can be done, and the right to live in a healthy environment gives people a reason to do so. The cosmeticism of a million posters across Anatolia does not mean, however, that a

change is taking place. It could mean that people merely like to look at pictures of birds. Even though the fez was banned in 1924 through Ataturk's reforms, the attitude he believed the hat represented continues. The removal of the fez from millions of heads, a cosmetic adjustment, may have only served to instill deeper tradition within the Turkish psyche.





Fig. 5 Coffee house in Lomé, Togo, with Dr. K. O. Ouedraogo, July 1996



## Chapter Four

The ideological differences DHKD faces with people at project sites across the nation are also present within the organization. Staff members exhibit moments of Hoca logic when interacting with each other and in their work. Moments of Ataturk-will are just as common. As an organization, DHKD is heading toward a unified ideology and practice. Individuals within this unit, however, make up a small-scale example of the diversity of thought throughout the country itself. By looking within itself at these varying sets of logic, the organization will recognize a richness comparable to that of the environment it is trying to protect.

DHKD's mission statement emphasizes the need for "long-term protection of all natural habitats and species in Turkey and the sustainable use of all natural resources" which can be obtained through public awareness education, conservation projects, lobbying, and cooperation with governmental and non-governmental institutions, and local people. Without invoking the mission statement, I asked those who work there what they would like to teach and how it could be done successfully<sup>3</sup>. The answers revealed struggles between the Trickster and the Savior within the office itself.

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<sup>3</sup> I talked to eleven staff members, which included at least one representative from each section, between 31 July and 7 August 1996 in private interviews at the DHKD main office in Istanbul. Most of the interviewees requested that their names not be given with their answers to my questions.

### What DHKD Staff Would Like to Teach

#### *Citizenship, Community, Democracy*

Learning how to be a citizen is a “part of the process of growing into the proper place on the world map,” remarked one DHKD staff member. If he could teach the people of Turkey anything, it would be to know their active role and responsibilities as citizens. Several of his colleagues agreed.

As citizens, people would be less like sheep, blindly following dynamic leaders. Ataturk called the Turks sheep, and he ordained himself as their shepherd. Under Ataturk’s guidance, the people learned what it is to unite as a nation, but not to take action as individual citizens. While the DHKD colleague believes community involvement will begin at the village level, the first staff member commented that it was already happening in the cities. Istanbul and other large cities are divided into neighborhoods in an attempt to manage the millions of people more effectively. Neighborhood designations also serve to bring the residents closer together. So when the second staff member commented that Turkey’s major cities were still *koylu*, or village-like, he was not far off. Some neighborhoods maintain a *koylu* feeling in their parks, around their *cesme* (sacred water fountains), and among the men drinking tea at the corner *bufe* (Fig. 7).





Fig. 7. Line at Ayiyubas mesme stand in July 1990

*To think for the future*

There is a slogan in Turkey that says, "Tomorrow's life is in the city."

Migration to cities is an undeniable phenomenon in Turkey. At the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the majority of the population still lived in rural areas. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that in the 1950, 75% of the total population of Turkey lived in rural areas. Today, that number has dropped to just 40%. People began moving to the cities in the 1940s and 1950s to improve their quality of life. Today, the ratio is reversed and more people live in cities than in villages, though the quality of life in the city could be less than that in the village.

The value placed on rural areas is deteriorating as people place more importance on the Western-influenced, convenient lifestyles found in Turkey's urban areas. The materialism and European culture of the cities is a magnet for poor, rural Turks. One staff member, during an educational trip on the Black Sea, showed slides of a crowded neighborhood in Istanbul to a group of students. She asked the students if they thought the neighborhood in the picture looked like a desirable place to live, and the general consensus was a resounding "yes!" They saw not crowds but the modern conveniences of the city, such as running water and washing machines in the building.

While these students and those who migrate to the cities believe they are thinking for the future, they are only anticipating a future of luxury for themselves. A future-oriented mentality such as this lacks belief in the common good. One staff member became annoyed the more he reflected on the shortsightedness of

some of his fellow citizens, particularly in hunting and agriculture. "They go to the government and say they don't want the marsh area. 'Dry it. We want more fields.' They don't know it's stupid . . . For fifteen years they use it then they want their Bird Paradise back because the land is too dry and they can't get anything from it." This "cluelessness," as he called it, has been passed on from generation to generation. Misinterpretation of Islam has been a particularly important influence. The Koran mentions that anyone who brings a wasteland back to life is blessed. This has beneficial implications for reclamation and restoration of degraded areas. But under this code, many wetlands, often viewed as wastelands, have been drained for agriculture. Even Nasreddin Hoca, in one of his narratives, claims that Lake Aksehir would be perfect for grazing if only it wasn't so flooded.

### *Pride in their natural heritage*

"I guess . . . I would teach them to be proud of their heritage," another staff member responded to my questioning. She was referring not only to their cultural heritage, but also to the natural landscape which had supported them for thousands of years, land for which the Turks had spilt blood in many battles. She proposed to teach the Turks to think about and appreciate not only the past but also the future of the land and the life it supports. It is simple to worry about immediate surroundings, especially if they directly affect people's way of life. It is more difficult to show a connection between the survival of animals and plants that

people rarely see. The animals Turks see most often are probably those that live on the streets: cats, dogs, and finches.

My landlady, Birgul, had about seven cats in her apartment. Each of the cats had something wrong with it. One had only three legs; another was blind. The one she gave to my roommate had a flat tail. Birgul worked for an organization that takes care of street animals. Turkish cities are overrun with street cats and dogs; the people seem to have a fondness for these feral creatures, even though they can be troublesome.

Mark Twain made the dogs of Istanbul legendary in his *Innocents Abroad*. He told a tale about a sultan who had proposed to send the dogs to one of the Prince's Islands in the Marmara Sea where they could live and multiply, without taking over the city of Istanbul. The dogs had been running around the streets in packs and chasing people. So, all the dogs were loaded up onto a boat. Unfortunately, the boat sank before it made it to the island and none of the dogs survived. The people of Istanbul were reportedly enraged at the sultan and since then street cats and dogs have been given freedom on Istanbul's streets. Most people treat the animals with a lot of respect, feeding them scraps from restaurants and butcher shops (Fig. 8). There is even a street animal hospital that operates out of an old bus. On a walk through a neighborhood on the Asian side of Istanbul, I found a street cat in a dumpster with a guard around its neck to protect it from scratching at a healing ear. Turks see the pain of the street animals every day and can do something about it. DHKD needs to help people make the

connection to the animals they see less often such as the dolphins, sea turtles, monk seals, falcons and other rare birds.





Fig. 8 Street cats eating popcorn (a coffee shop owner's trash) June 1995

### *Literacy*

Illiteracy was addressed by only one staff member as a problem that needs to be overcome, particularly in the villages. If the people become literate, they will be able to grasp any concept, including the ideas of conservationists. Illiteracy was a major problem before the introduction of the Latin alphabet because of the elaborate, elite nature of Ottoman script. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports that only 10% of the population of Turkey was literate at the formation of the Republic. By introducing an alphabet more phonetically suitable to the sounds of Turkish, Ataturk was attempting to give everyone the opportunity for literacy.

Though the numbers have decreased remarkably, today many are still illiterate. A man who sold fruit out of the back of his truck on the side of the building where I lived a few years ago was illiterate. I became acquainted with him when I asked to take a picture of him and his truck full of glorious fruits and vegetables. He was very pleased and called his son over to be in the photo as well. After I took the photo, he asked me to take down his address and send him a copy. I took out paper and pen, and he wrote down his name, "Mehmet Zobu." Then he handed the paper back to me and dictated the rest of the address. When I held it out to him to ask if I spelled everything correct, he just nodded. Later on I discovered I had misspelled a few words that he didn't notice. Spelling errors are rare in Turkey because each letter is pronounced the same way no matter what word it is in.

I ran into Mehmet again this past summer, and he invited me to have tea.

He thanked me for the photograph and asked why I didn't include a return address. This time I gave him my address and took a photograph of him and the bean seller. He gave me his address again in the same way. He wrote down his name then handed the paper back to me for dictation, the same as before.

In the days of Ottoman rule there were men who would set up tables along the sidewalks and sell their services writing documents for the illiterate masses. That tradition continues today in some areas, except now the men use typewriters and the Latin alphabet. Ataturk was able to unite education in Turkey under the Ministry of Education in 1924 and make primary school mandatory, but there are still those who never learned to read and write. These people will not learn from DHKD's beautiful posters or the Ministry of the Environment's catchy slogans. They need to be reached through oral literature like in the past, or, as the DHKD staff member wished, NGOs will have to take to the field and teach the people themselves.

### *To respect laws*

The Hoca narrative from Tokmakcioglu below identifies a key example of Hoca logic that occurs in many everyday situations--giving exception to one's own needs over another's, to the point of hurting both the other and the larger community.

The Hoca used to look with envy at the apple trees growing in a garden surrounded by high walls. Finally, he found a ladder, and leaning it against the wall, climbed to the top and began to pick the apples at the edge of the garden. When the gardener saw him, he

ran over and asked the Hoca: "What are you doing there?"

The Hoca answered: "I'm selling ladders."

The gardener was astonished and said: "What kind of a place is this to be selling ladders?"

The Hoca replied: "Ladders can be sold anywhere. Have you ever seen such a thing as a ladder shop? I can sell ladders anywhere I like." (Karabas, 1996: 25)

Bypassing laws is often seen as cleverness. The Hoca was able to outsmart the owner of the garden by invoking his right to sell ladders wherever he wished. The rights of the natural world are subjugated in the same way because people have a right to earn a living however possible. The right and duty to work is protected within Turkey's constitution (Article 49). Therefore, getting around regulations that stifle unlimited exploitation and growth is often seen as a virtue or wisdom.

The rest of the day that I spent with Mehmet, the fruit seller, we talked about how difficult it is to sell fruit on the street without getting caught by the *belediye* (municipal) authorities (Fig. 9). Mehmet and his friend, a man selling beans on a push cart, didn't have permits to sell their fruit on the street, and the *belediye* looks for vendors illegally selling things out of the back of vans and on pushcarts. There was always someone on the look out for the authorities--maybe a waiter at the restaurant on the corner or the boy sitting on a stool outside a store. When the authorities did arrive, the bean seller crossed the street and stood around with the men drinking tea at the restaurant. Mehmet would drive off in a hurry, as though he was on his way to a delivery.



Fig 9. Fruit and vegetable vendors, Kuyubasi, Istanbul, July 1996

## The Methods DHKD Would Use for Instruction

### *Television*

Nasreddin Hoca is often seen as trying to take the easy way out. Even in his role as an educator, he takes the responsibility lightly. The following narrative illustrates how some staff members at DHKD believe approaching the people through their illiteracy and laziness would be more effective than going out in the field. In effect, relying upon the television to educate could be seen by the viewers as justification to watch it rather than read.

Mounting the pulpit one day, Nasreddin Hoca asked, "Do you know what I am going to speak to you about today?"

The congregation said, "No."

"In that case," said Nasreddin Hoca, "it would take too long to tell you what I had on my mind." And he went home.

The following day, mounting the pulpit, he again asked, "Do you know what I am going to speak to you about today?"

This time the congregation answered, "Yes."

"In that case," said Nasreddin Hoca, "there is no need for me to say anything at all." And he went home.

The third day Nasreddin Hoca asked again from the pulpit, "Do you know what I am going to speak to you about today?"

The congregation, certain that Hoca would be caught this time, answered, "Some of us do, and some of us don't."

"In that case," said Nasreddin Hoca, "let those who know tell those who don't." And he went home.

(Muallimoglu, 1986: 70)

The staff has a point to make, though. Televisions are increasingly becoming an item of comfort rather than luxury in Turkey. Since 1990, Turkish

television has been in a spiral of deregulation. The number of television stations soared from one in 1990 to 16 national stations and 300 local stations in 1996 (Dowden, June 1996). In a 1996 study in *The Economist*, a professor from Ankara University, Bulent Chatli, claimed that virtually everyone had a television. "Television," he said, "is drawing up the agenda of life in Turkey" (Dowden, June 1996).

Even in small villages, people have satellite dishes and televisions that are well-taken care of. I remember visiting the home of a man from the Ataturk farm near Seyfe Golu in central Anatolia (Fig. 10). The house was a small clay building with three rooms--the sitting room, the kitchen and the bedroom. The man had us sit on cushions on the raised floor in the first room while his wife and daughter prepared *ayran* (yogurt drink) and *koy ekmegi* (village flat bread). Hung on the wall opposite of where I sat was a large, red carpet with a stag. Next to me was a color television on a stand with a remote control covered in plastic. That was all that decorated the room besides our cushions and the rugs on the floor.





Fig. 10. Village near Seyfe Golu in Central Anatolia. July 1996



Two staff members at DHKD claimed that television is the most effective teacher, particularly short, “sexy programs” that are “funny and musical” and easy to memorize. They claimed that people are “too lazy to read, but not too lazy to watch.” In effect, the viewers would need to infer the message on the screen. Follow-up to judge effectiveness and comprehension of this inference would be too difficult to administer. While the staff is using Hoca-logic in this instance, the effect is that people base their learning and knowledge on visuals. Atatürk remains visually present in public areas, but the meaning of this presence is open to interpretation by the individual. DHKD would be surrendering to this passive absorption of meaning if they turned all their attention on televised education. So, while television is one of the most effective ways to reach the entire nation, it should not become the only tool for education.

DHKD does use television to draw in members and educate infrequently. An example of one of the membership spots is a completely black screen and bold words in white that say “Forget about it,” “Give up,” or “What’s it to you?” (Fig. 11). The bottom of the screen usually has a very general, yet apocalyptic, summary of Turkish environmental disaster. The short commercial also includes a message from DHKD urging the viewer to join in the cause. These ads are pretty sophisticated for a population that is just being introduced to conservation ideas. This type of television spot is a favorite method for attracting memberships, rather than educating the public.

## BOŞ VERİN!

Yaşadığımız kenti kasıp kavuran hava kirliliğine karşı bilinen en etkili çare, orman örtüsünü korumak ve çoğaltmak! Bunu bile bile, Türkiye'nin giderek çölleşmesine daha ne kadar boş vereceksiniz?

71/M. S. 73

D - EKONOMİK FORUM - 34

Biz Türkiye'nin doğal çevresini korumaya kararlıyız. Sizin de katılmanızı bekliyoruz.  
Doğal Hayatı Koruma Derneği P.K. 18 Bebek 80810 İstanbul Tel: (212) 281 03 21 Faks: (212) 279 55 44



Fig. 11. DHKD membership advertisement

### *Schools*

The former director of education at DHKD had at one time handed me a short WWF essay by Ivan Hattingh about environmental education. The essay emphasizes that serious environmental educators should focus their attention and energy on the institutions that are responsible for delivering education.

Supplemental environmental education only serves to further marginalize the issues and solutions. The staff members who proposed spending more money and time on in-school education were both educated in European-style schools and had been fortunate to begin their conservation training at an early age.

The problem with relying completely on schools is that the impact on the community is less immediate. It takes a few generations before conservation ideas become a basic part of the psyche of a population. Ataturk's reforms through schools took several generations. The immediate backlash took the leader by surprise. He assumed that the visual and political changes he made for the Turkish nation would take hold in the people as quickly and strongly as they had in him. The DHKD staff members who believed in the power of formal education admitted that it would take more than twenty years for conservation ideas to become the standard basis for logic. These staff members were willing to wait that long.

### *Enforcing regulations and punishment*

One staff member believes in the validity of a Hoca-based proverb: It's no

use to beat the child after he has broken the jar.

Nasreddin Hoca handed his daughter a water jar and told her to fetch some water from the well, and he also gave her a smack in the face, saying, "Be careful, don't break the jar."

One of his friends who saw the innocent child beaten in this way, said, "Why on earth did you beat her? She hasn't done anything wrong."

"I must show her the serious consequences of breaking the jar before she breaks it, so as to make her pay attention," Nasreddin Hoca explained. "What good would it do to punish her after she breaks the jar?"  
(Muallimoglu, 1986: 34)

She added a disclaimer that she isn't fascist but believes the old government and education systems need to be destroyed and new ones installed. The new system would be devoid of corruption and people would fear the punishment for breaking laws. At the same time, she explained, there would need to be education for people to understand the meaning of the punishment.

"In Turkey it is too late [for education]", she explained. Hence the need for a new system. Another staff member believed the current laws could be enforced if only there was consistency and education about the value of following regulations--especially about the impact of trying to avoid regulation.

This anecdote also brings up the point that Turks rarely mind their own business. I witnessed this one day when I bought a snack from a street vendor. After my friends also got their snack and one of them paid for all of us, the crowd waiting for the bus next to the stand began to complain loudly. They thought the vendor had cheated us. Some of the people standing close to him had even

watched him give us the change. Apparently, it's wrong to cheat foreigners, and even more so if you get caught.

### *Modeling for Empowerment*

One evening, while riding the ferry across the Bosphorous with an American friend, I had the fortune of meeting a young Turkish engineer named Mustafa. He was standing next to us and asked us if we were British and what we were doing in Turkey. I told him I was American and volunteering at DHKD. He didn't immediately recognize the name but he did recognize some of the issues they were addressing once I had described them. Mustafa said, "You know, it's so funny that I met you tonight. I was just at my office, and my wife called me crying. I asked her, 'Why are you crying, Lale?' And all she could say was, 'Because of the poor turtles on the TV.'"

At this point I knew what he was talking about. The evening news had a report about DHKD's turtle areas project. There were some shots of the mother turtles laying eggs and of the hatchlings making their way to the sea. The turtles that Lale was crying about were the little ones that wandered further inland toward disco lights rather than out to sea. In the morning, those hatchlings would scorch in the sun. She told Mustafa that she didn't know what to do. She wanted to help those little turtles survive.

Lale, a young lawyer, is part of a generation of elites in Turkey who have been introduced to conservation and environmental issues at an early age in

school. She and her husband, and many others like them, understand the connection between the activities of humans and the destruction of the natural world. In Lale's case, she took this understanding one step further by wanting to take action. Unfortunately, the only DHKD activity for those who want to protect sea turtles is membership in the organization. Frustration about inability to act affects more people than one would expect. The teenagers right now are being raised as passive citizens as well. After one of the Habitat II NGO Forum presentations about environmental education, a Turkish girl stood up and commented, "We're tired of hearing about the environment. We want to know how to do something."

One staff member at DHKD admitted that she would like "to direct people to come together . . . and . . . use practical ways to solve their problems with them and show them the methods [for doing so]." She would like to meet the needs of the coming generations by giving them outlets for action and practical solutions to their problems, but she is limited by the goals of the organization and her own self-consciousness toward teaching.

### *"It's Impossible"*

Finally, there are those who work at DHKD who believe Turks have much to learn about participating in their future and the protection of their natural surroundings, but there is something holding back these conservation leaders from making a difference. They believe that either they personally don't have the

capabilities to teach their fellow citizens or that the problem is too ingrained in the Turkish psyche and governmental framework to allow change. These leaders at DHKD believe Turks are difficult to teach. The following Nasreddin Hoca illustrates that perhaps they are being a bit short-sighted themselves.

Nasreddin Hoca was very fond of helva, the national sweetmeat. One day he went into a grocer's and asked if he had flour.

"Yes," the grocer answered.

"Sugar?"

"Yes."

"And butter?"

"Yes."

"Then why, for heaven's sake, don't you make yourself some helva?" (Muallimoglu, 1986: 72)

Individualism and selfishness in people is not something that can be "replaced" with communal concern as one staff member wished. Rather, a problem that arises out of the general public, and hurts that same group, has a solution in its source. The ingredients for the solution are there; it's the instructions and, in the case of DHKD, the will to do so that is missing.

## Conclusion

"Hah!" the old man exclaimed, rising to his feet. "You can't decide, and neither should you. Whenever we Turks decide, we seem to injure ourselves. We hurt each other. Indecision," he said, thumping the table in front of me. "Indecision, not ideology. That's the whole point of being Turkish." (Seal, 1996: 334)

These words, spoken by an anonymous Mustafa in a Mediterranean village, are prophetic for the Turkish conservation movement and for DHKD itself. Is the Turkish identity truly caught between many different ideologies, and indecision is the only way to survive amidst them all? The DHKD staff members exhibited tendencies toward pragmatic indecision, yet also seemed to regret that aspect of themselves and the organization. If indecision is the hallmark of the Turkish identity, then the exercise of Ataturk-like determination will only serve to gather in the Turks as sheep once more. The Turks will never decide what to do; they will never take action and organize for themselves because they won't be able to decide where to start or what to do. Is this the future of conservation in Turkey?

Rather than paralyzing the organization, indecision leads DHKD to try many techniques and address several issues. This pragmatism, while naturally chaotic, also benefits Turkey in the long run. I believe that DHKD can make Hoca-logic work for them, rather than attempt to work around it with imported ideas and terminology.



Nasreddin Hoca said once in a well-known narrative, "If the mountain won't come to me, I will go to the mountain." If DHKD is facing indecision within the organization similar to that within the larger population, it needs to be recognized. As Turks, they are not above the tendency of unresolve and the following of dynamic leaders. The future of DHKD's conservation style relies on a radical shift in the psyche of the population such as only thousands of years of culture could create. DHKD will have to "go to the mountain" itself and learn from the Turkish population how an indecisive group can make decisions for its future. From my analysis of the struggle for balance within the Turkish psyche and within DHKD, I offer the following suggestions to the organization, in order to bring them to the mountain.

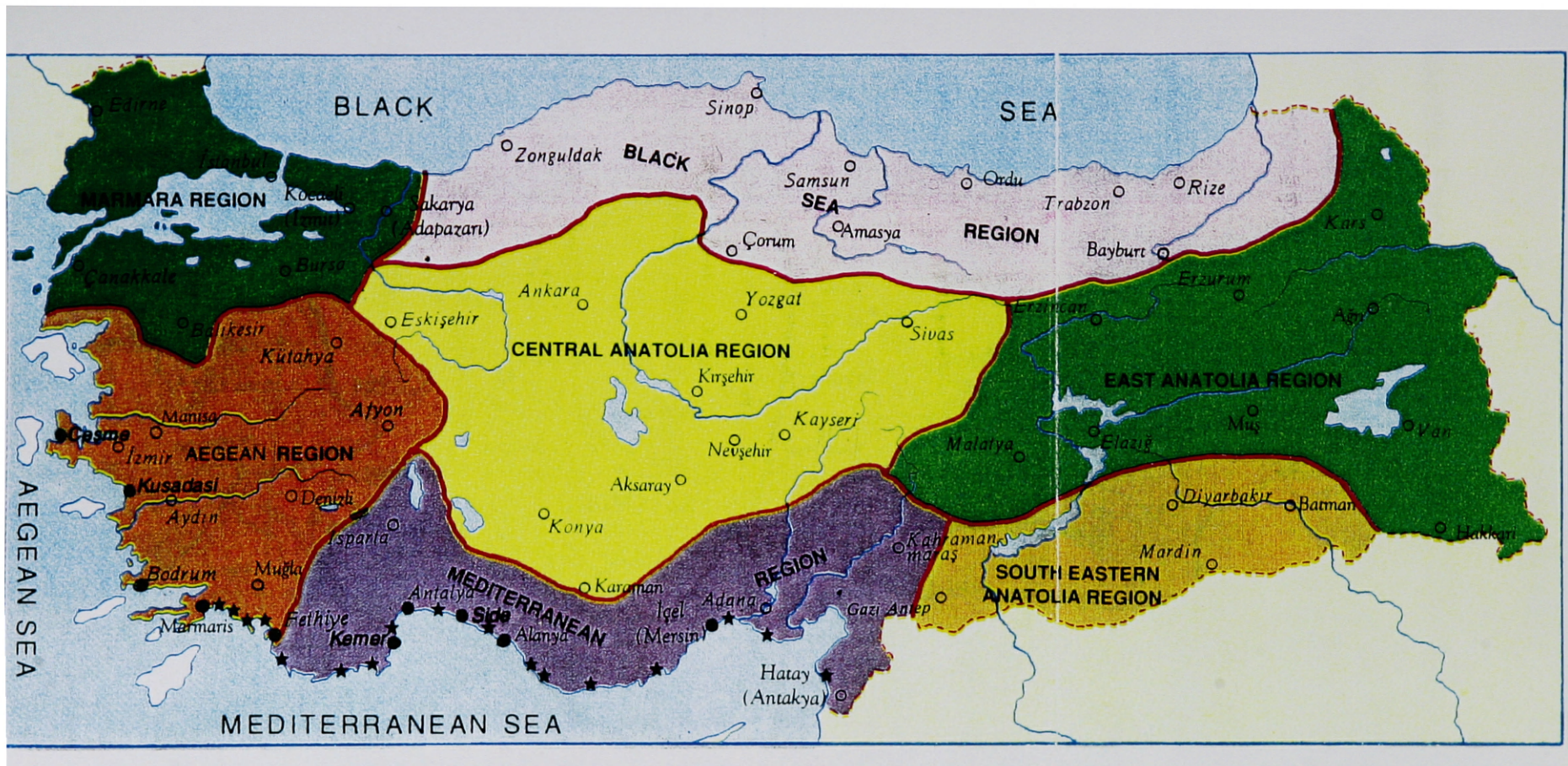
1) Increase interaction with the general population. One tactic might be to have DHKD staff live a village existence for a period of time, in order to move closer to the villagers whom they seek to help. With this experience, program planning for the region would more reflect the ideals and needs of the people who live there.

2) Use Turkish conservation terms. Imported terms such as "coastal management" and "strategic plan" are undoing Ataturk's language reforms. DHKD's dependence on Western terminology is an indication of a huge gap in the way the rest of the population experiences the environment. Communicating with Turkish terms would ease some of the alienation that the staff members bring with them to project sites.

3) Storytelling as a means for education. Turkey has a strong oral tradition present in the epics, poems and anecdotes that proliferate the culture. It is logical then, in a nation with a literacy problem, to reach out to people through oral literature. Storytellers need to create, collect and tell Turkish environmental awareness stories. The storytellers could then travel around on campaigns visiting coffee houses and schools and talk to the people in a familiar way.

4) Look to the Koran and poetry. DHKD could incorporate lines from the Koran or well-known poetry into their materials. One such line from the Koran that promotes a moral responsibility toward nature is "'Greater indeed than the creation of man is the cration of the heavens and the earth' (40:57)" (Rahim, 1991). The use of Koranic verses is a subtle way to invoke the spirit of conservation. DHKD must recognize true Islam's positive ideas about ecology and environmental issues. In fact, it might help people understand their faith more by spreading these ideas.

I offer these suggestions to DHKD in order that they might identify their role in creating a truly Turkish conservation movement without alienating those whom they are trying to educate. By reaching out and educating in indigenous ways, the reconnection of Turkish people to their surroundings will be more fluid and thorough.



- ★ Important Sea Turtle Nesting Beach
- ☼ Major Mediterranean Tourist Area

Sources: "The 17 Important Sea Turtle Nesting Areas of Türkiye" In Francine Jacobs. Mary Beath, Illustrator. 1992. "Sea Turtles in Every Aspect". Translated by DHKD, Turkey. 3rd Ed. "Turkey Tourist Map--Geographical Districts". 1994. Ministry of Tourism, Republic of Turkey. Cem Ofset Matbaacılık Sanayi A.Ş.: Istanbul.

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